

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LIMA 07366 172215Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 7366

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, PE
SUBJECT: POLITICAL OVERTONES OF MINERS STRIKE

REF: (A) LIMA 7178, (B) LIMA 7235

1. GOP MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINES JUAN SANCHEZ GONZALES WARNED AUGUST 16 THAT LABOR PROBLEMS, PARTICULARLY THE MINE STRIKES, ARE DANGEROUS AND THREATEN TO PRODUCE ANARCHY AND DISORDER. AMPLIFYING THE THEME OF SANCHEZ, MINISTER OF LABOR JOSE GARCIA CALDERON EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE MINeworkERS FEDERATION IS CONTINUING A STRIKE COSTING PERU MILLIONS IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS WHILE REJECTING ANY CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED SOLUTIONS. GARCIA CALDERON SAID THAT CENTROMIN HAD OFFERED DISCHARGE PAY AND ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT WHILE SOUTHERN PERU COPPER CORPORATION WAS PREPARED TO PAY THIRTY THOUSAND SOLES (ABOUT \$180) MONTHLY FOR FOUR YEARS TO THE FAMILIES OF FIRED WORKERS, THE KEY ISSUE IN THE STRIKE. THE MINISTER NOTED THAT POLITICAL EXTREMISTS WERE TRYING TO PROVOKE THE GOP TO TAKE "ENERGETIC MEASURES". HOWEVER, HE WARNED, WE SHOULD NOT FALL INTO THE TRAP OF THESE AGITATORS BUT CONTINUE TO SEEK PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS.

2. ACCORDING TO A SEPARATE NEWS STORY THE ELEVEN DAYS OF STRIKE IN MINES, SMELTERS AND METALWORKS BY AUGUST 16 HAVE COST THE GOVERNMENT APPROXIMATELY DOLS 12.05 MILLION DOLLARS (AT THE OFFICIAL
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LIMA 07366 172215Z

RATE) IN EXPORT EARNINGS AND ABOUT DOLS 1.38 MILLION IN TAXES. AN SPCC OFFICIAL TOLD THE DCM THAT HIS COMPANY WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO FILL SOME ORDERS BECAUSE OF PRODUCTION LOSSES AND PRESS TODAY CARRIES SOUTHERN'S ANNOUNCEMENT IN NEW YORK OF SUSPENSION OF COPPER SHIPMENTS. THE STRIKE SITUATION REMAINS UNCHANGED ALTHOUGH SPCC UNDERSTANDS THAT RANK AND FILE WORKERS ARE EXERTING SOME PRESSURE ON THEIR LEADERS TO SEEK A SETTLEMENT AND RETURN

TO WORK.

3. A GROUP OF FIRED MINEWORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS FROM THE CERRO DE PASCO AREA MARCHED TO LIMA AND HAVE STAGED DEMONSTRATIONS IN FRONT OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, AND IN NEARBY STREETS. MORE MARCHERS ARE EXPECTED TODAY. LEFTIST DELEGATES IN THE ASSEMBLY REPEATEDLY RETURN TO THE THEME OF THE FIREYOQOMQ FROM PSR, UDP AND FOCEP HAVE PARTICIPATED ACTIVELY IN THE DEMONSTRATIONS.

4. COMMENT: THE LEFT OBVIOUSLY THINKS THE STRIKE AFFORDS AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO CONFRONT THE GOVERNMENT AND EMBARRASS APRA (BY IDENTIFYING IT AS ANTI-LABOR). THE COMBINATION OF ECONOMIC PRESSURE AND PUBLICITY THROUGH THE ASSEMBLY IS A STRONG ONE AND POSES A DIFFICULT PROBLEM FOR THE GOP AND APRA'S LEADERS. THUS FAR, HOWEVER, THE GOP HAS ACTED WITH RESTRAINT. SHLAUDEMAN

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